

Grants to Individuals

LITERATURE FELLOWSHIPS

“**A** Literature Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts means . . . I live in a country that chooses to hear the vital singing—the pulsations, the life blood, the pathways that connect us profoundly to each other, profoundly to the intelligent compassionate cosmos.”

—Cathy Song, poet and teacher
Honolulu, HI

Cathy Song used her 1997 Literature Fellowship to take time off from teaching in order to complete a volume of poetry, *The Roses of Guadalupe*. Her comments illustrate her gratitude to the American people for providing her with this opportunity, which was not available through the commercial publishing marketplace. Her comments also reflect her awareness that the U.S. Congress singled out Literature Fellowships as the Endowment's only remaining competitive grant category for individual artists.

Three decades earlier, the Arts Endowment announced its first recipients of grants to individual writers. Those recipients included writers who later became luminaries of American literature, such as William Gaddis, Grace Paley, and Hayden Carruth. Since then, the Endowment has awarded Creative Writing Fellowships to approximately 2,300 writers, and sponsored work resulting in an estimated 2,000 books, including E. Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, and Oscar Hijuelos' *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*. Thirty of the 38 recipients of the National Book

Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the Pulitzer Prize In Poetry and Fiction since 1990 have been previous Arts Endowment Fellowship winners. All but one received their fellowships before these other awards, usually 10 to 20 years earlier.

Arts Endowment Literature Fellowships encourage new work, since most of the recipients are unknown even within the literary field at the time the awards are made. Simultaneously, the Fellowships give writers national recognition for the first time, an invaluable validation of their talent to peers, agents, publishers, and presenters around the country.

Another 1997 grant recipient was Margaret Almon, a public services librarian at the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania, who used her grant to travel to New Mexico and work on a second volume of poetry. And Linda-Ruth Berger, from Contoocook, New Hampshire, took a one-year sabbatical from her work as a psychotherapist to write, travel, and complete research for a poetry manuscript exploring the later lives and paintings of visual artists. This project aims to shed light on the shifts in perception and meaning that aging brings to a person's life and work.

Literature is inherently a national and international art form. Both particular and universal, it says something about a specific people while also revealing something about all humanity. Three of this year's Literature Fellowships went towards the translation into English of poems from Bosnia, Israel, and Japan.

Literature Fellowships**40 awards \$800,000**

All of the following awards are in the literature discipline.

Fellowships for Creative Writers**Margaret Almon***Dunmore, PA \$20,000***Louis S. Asekoff***St. James, NY \$20,000***Renee Ashley***Ringwood, NJ \$20,000***Dorothy M. Barresi***Northridge, CA \$20,000***Linda-Ruth Berger***Contoocook, NH \$20,000***David Biespiel***Portland, OR \$20,000***Millicent C. Borges***Long Beach, CA \$20,000***Sean Brendan-Brown***Olympia, WA \$20,000***Nick Carbo***San Antonio, TX \$20,000***Ann V. Christie***Baltimore, MD \$20,000*

Cathy Song of Honolulu, Hawaii received a 1997 Literature Fellowship for poetry.
Photo by John Eddy.

Lisa Coffman*Morrisville, PA \$20,000***Deborah A. DeNicola***Brookline, MA \$20,000***Alice B. Fogel***Acworth, NH \$20,000***Michele Glazer***Portland, OR \$20,000***Jewelle L. Gomez***San Francisco, CA \$20,000***Jeffrey L. Gustavson***Brooklyn, NY \$20,000***Judith Hall***Oxnard, CA \$20,000***Kathleen S. Halme***Wilmington, NC \$20,000***James W. Harris***Alameda, CA \$20,000***William Bernard Keckler***Harrisburg, PA \$20,000***Edward Kleinschmidt***San Francisco, CA \$20,000***Mark A. Levine***Brooklyn, NY \$20,000***Dionisio D. Martinez***Tampa, FL \$20,000***James D. McCorkle***Geneva, NY \$20,000*

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Leslea Newman

Northampton, MA \$20,000

Susan F. Prospere

Houston, TX \$20,000

Thomas Rabbitt

Tuscaloosa, AL \$20,000

Joseph J. Ross

Washington, DC \$20,000

Charles M. Rossiter

Oak Park, IL \$20,000

Nicholas Samaras

New Port Richey, FL \$20,000

Catherine Sasanov (Catherine A. Baker)

Cambridge, MA \$20,000

Leonard W. Schwartz

New York, NY \$20,000

Carol A. Snow

San Francisco, CA \$20,000

Cathy Song (Cathy S. Davenport)

Honolulu, HI \$20,000

Elaine G. Terranova

Philadelphia, PA \$20,000

Naomi French Wallace

Prospect, KY \$20,000

Cynthia Zarin

New York, NY \$20,000

Fellowships for Translators**Ammiel Alcalay**

Brooklyn, NY \$20,000

To support the translation of an anthology of contemporary Bosnian poetry.

Tsipi E. Keller

New York, NY \$20,000

To support the translation of nearly 100 poems by four contemporary, Israeli female writers.

Leza A. Lowitz

Oakland, CA \$20,000

To support the translation of Ayukawa Nobuo's *Selected Poems: 1936–1984*.

**Grants to
Individuals****109**

Literature
Fellowships



Poet David Biespiel of Portland, Oregon received a 1997 Literature Fellowship. Photo by Allan de Lay.

AMERICAN JAZZ MASTER FELLOWSHIPS

“It means an awful lot when you’re chosen for an award by your peers. More than you could possibly imagine.”

—James Moody, tenor saxophonist
San Diego, CA

This statement by jazz artist James Moody captures the importance of the American Jazz Master Fellowships to jazz musicians and the music field. In 1982 the Arts Endowment began honoring great American jazz artists by selecting John Birks “Dizzy” Gillespie, Sun Ra and Roy Eldridge as its first American Jazz Masters. During 1997, tenor saxophonist James Moody, bassist Ron Carter, and saxophonist-composer Wayne Shorter joined 49 other American jazz artists who have been selected for this title. The fellowships recognize artistic excellence, significant contributions to jazz, and overall impact on the music field. Up to three fellows are selected annually by a panel of jazz artists from a national pool of nominations, and each fellow receives a one-time-only award of \$20,000. The fellows are honored at an Arts Endowment-sponsored concert before thousands of jazz ed-

ucators, musicians, industry members, and enthusiasts during the International Association of Jazz Educators conference each January.

Ron Carter, with more than 2,000 recordings to his credit, is one of the jazz field’s most original, prolific, and influential bassists. He performed with the acclaimed Miles Davis Quintet from 1963–1968, earned Grammy awards in 1988 and 1993, and is currently a Distinguished Professor of Music at the City College of New York.

James Moody was an early member of Dizzy Gillespie’s big band and helped give birth to bebop. His many career honors include induction into the International Jazz Hall of Fame. Mayors of two American cities—Newark, New Jersey and Savannah, Georgia—have proclaimed James Moody Days in his honor.

Wayne Shorter is co-founder of the groundbreaking group Weather Report. From his work as a standout young musician for Art Blakey’s renowned Jazz Messengers to later experimentation performing with Miles Davis, Shorter has had a profound effect on modern jazz through his work as a performer, composer, and recording artist.



**American Jazz Master
Fellowships**

3 awards \$60,000

All of the following awards are in
the music discipline.

Carter, Ron

New York, NY \$20,000

Bassist

Moody, James

San Diego, CA \$20,000

Tenor Saxophonist

Shorter, Wayne

Studio City, CA \$20,000

Saxophonist and Composer

**Grants to
Individuals**

III

American Jazz
Master Fellowships

James Moody, tenor saxophonist from San Diego, California was honored as an American Jazz Master. Photo © Warner Bros. Records, Inc., 1996, by Jeffrey Henson Scales. Reprinted with permission.

NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWSHIPS

My traditional work let me see how influenced I really was by my heritage, my history. It showed me my roots in this area; opened my eyes. It's all inspired by my upbringing . . . I want to achieve the level of quality of those old masters—what they captured on wood, emotions so powerful, so moving.”

—*Ramón José López, santero carver
Santa Fe, NM*

112

Every year since the National Heritage Fellowship program was launched in 1982, artists like 1997 National Heritage Fellow Ramón José López have uttered words similar to these upon receiving their award. In doing so, they speak to the essence and the lifeline of the folk and traditional arts—the close connection of the individual artist to a larger cultural and artistic community, present and past. Over the past 17 years, more than 200 National Heritage Fellowships have recognized artists representing scores of cultural backgrounds, aesthetic traditions, and artistic genres. The list of the 1997 National Heritage Fellows that follows is typical of the cultural and geographic breadth of each year's list of awardees.

The artists do not apply for their fellowships, but are nominated by others who admire them for their excellence, accomplishment, and the contributions they make to their art form. A national panel of experts with a broad knowledge of American traditional arts reviews the nominations and recommends a select group to the National Council on the Arts and the Endow-

ment's Chairman for approval. Excellence of artistry, authenticity of tradition, and significance within their art forms are the criteria. For example Jim and Jesse McReynolds, 1997 Heritage winners, have long been respected for the high caliber of their bluegrass musicianship, their faithfulness to the core of the “mountain music” tradition in which they were raised, and their innovative instrumental techniques that enriched and expanded bluegrass music.

Each year, the fellows receive their awards in a ceremony in Washington, DC and are celebrated in a free public concert gala that is recorded and distributed nationally to public radio stations. This year, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton presented the awards of \$10,000 each to ten recipients in a ceremony at the White House. The ceremony opened with joyous music by 1997 Heritage Fellow Edward Babb leading the Harlem-based, brass band gospel group, the McCollough Sons of Thunder. Their spirited music prompted Mrs. Clinton to announce “I've asked them to play one more piece afterwards so that any of you who were late or more than 50 miles away and didn't hear will be able to enjoy in person, up close and personal this extraordinary group.” Babb was 13 years old when Mr. Albert Edgington of the United House of Prayer in Harlem asked him to pick out an instrument from a neighborhood pawnshop, and he has travelled the road to accomplishment. Each of the other 1997 Fellows also has a story sure to inspire generations of folk artists and their enthusiasts.



Wenyi Hua is internationally regarded as the premier artist in one of China's oldest and most refined forms of opera—kunqu. She has performed and directed extensively and founded the Hua Kun Opera in Los Angeles. Photo courtesy of Wenyi Hua.

Grants to Individuals

113

National Heritage Fellowships

National Heritage Fellowships

10 awards \$100,000

All of the following awards are in the folk and traditional arts discipline.

Babb, Edward
Jamaica, NY \$10,000
"Shout" Band Gospel Trombonist

Brown, Charles
Berkeley, CA \$10,000
Rhythm & Blues Pianist, Vocalist, and Composer

Clark, Gladys LeBlanc
Duson, LA \$10,000
Cajun Spinner and Weaver

Hua, Wenyi
Arcadia, CA \$10,000
Chinese Kunqu Opera Singer

Khan, Ali Akbar
San Anselmo, CA \$10,000
North Indian Sarod Player and Raga Composer

López, Ramón José
Santa Fe, NM \$10,000
Santero Carver and Metalsmith

McReynolds, Jim & Jesse
Gallatin, TN \$10,000
Bluegrass Musicians

Nguyen, Phong
Kent, OH \$10,000
Vietnamese Musician and Scholar

Rankin, Hystercine
Lorman, MS \$10,000
African-American Quilter

Whitaker, Francis
Carbondale, CO \$10,000
Blacksmith and Ornamental Ironworker